

ARNORTH, partners conduct hurricane drill

Army North Public Affairs

FORT BELVOIR, Va. – United States Army North conducted a commander's conference and hurricane season Rehearsal of Concept exercise April 10-13 at Fort Belvoir, Va., to prepare for the 2007 Hurricane Season.

"The primary purpose for the commander's conference was to review and prepare the Command for the upcoming disaster season – covering the concept of operations for DOD employment to natural disasters," said Charlie Canedy, chief of the Commander's Initiative Group. "The ROC drill's focus was to involve as many interagency partners as possible and rehearse USARNORTH employment for Incidents of National Significance to better understand how all are interrelated and continue to foster our relationships with our federal partners."

USARNORTH, as the Army Service Component Command for U.S. Northern Command, is responsible for conducting Homeland Defense and Civil Support operations within the NORTHCOM area of responsibility.

The hurricane rehearsal allowed USARNORTH staff, Defense Coordinating Officers, and representatives from other federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to review actions that the command would take in response to two different hurricane scenarios.

"This is extremely important," said Tom Davies, Federal Coordinating Officer for FEMA Region III. "Understanding how you roll out and the complexities of DOD is key (for federal disaster response)."

Davies pointed out that the rehearsal also gave the participants a chance to continue to build relationships, which helps the federal government be better prepared to respond to disasters.

USARNORTH has established close working relationships with federal, state and local disaster preparedness and response agencies since its activation in October 2005. Through the hard work of the 10 DCOs co-located with FEMA in each of the 10 FEMA regions, the Department of Defense is prepared to support the primary federal agency and state and local authorities in the event of a natural or manmade disaster.

Col. Frank Kosich, Region I DCO, said that the rehearsal exercise was a good venue for USARNORTH and its federal partners to discuss DOD's role in disaster preparedness and response.

"This was a thorough rehearsal," Kosich said. "It prompted good dialogue and exchange about the challenges DOD has in assessing risks and making decisions associated with providing support to the lead federal agency in response to an event of this magnitude."

USARNORTH has been involved in a robust training and exercise program in order to prepare for hurricane season. Preparations will culminate with Exercise Ardent Sentry in May.

“Ardent Sentry 07 will be the capstone event in our preparatory activities for hurricane season,” Kosich said. “The exercise will tell us whether we are ready to rock and roll. I’m looking forward to it.”